

**Statement of  
Paul J. Lennon  
Director, Intelligence and Emergency Preparedness  
Management for the Los Angeles County  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA)**

**Homeland Security Subcommittee on Emergency  
Preparedness, Science, and Technology**

**"The London Attacks: Training to Respond in a Mass  
Transit Environment"  
July 26, 2005**

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Thank you Chairman King, Congressman Pascrell and Members of the subcommittee for providing the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) an opportunity to discuss the key role training plays in effectively responding to a terrorist attack on a mass transit property.

On January 26, 2005 a tragic rail incident occurred in the Los Angeles area. The accident was the deadliest passenger rail incident in the United States since 1999, killing 11 and injuring over 180 individuals. The accident, it would be later be found, was caused by a deranged individual and not a terrorist – but its effects were just as devastating as the attacks the rocked London on July 7, 2005.

The response to the January 26<sup>th</sup> train disaster by the City of Los Angeles, my agency, the City of Glendale's first responders and numerous other emergency first-responders was immediate, positive and overwhelming. Within five minutes the first triage unit was set up and a host of other support services were put into place only moments later.

The reason I cite the January 26<sup>th</sup> rail accident is simple. That tragic event provides a vivid illustration, which is fresh in my mind and those of my fellow transit security colleagues, that training to respond to a terrorist attack is vital. In fact, to ensure a rapid and effective response in the event of a terrorist attack on one of our rail cars, our buses or one of our hundreds of stations or facilities in Los Angeles County, training is not merely an option, it is mandatory.

We train at my agency to make mistakes, so we do not make mistakes when our exercises go from the comfort of a table-top drill to a real world terrorist attack.

Today I would like to share with members of this subcommittee several of the training techniques that the LACMTA has successfully used to prepare ourselves for a terrorist attack, like that which struck London earlier this month or earlier attacks on mass transit properties in Moscow and Madrid.

The key part of our agency's training program focuses on preparing to respond and preparing to prevent.

First, we are focused on enhancing our interaction and coordination with our security partners at the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and with all other law enforcement and first responder agencies with jurisdiction within Los Angeles County. We can have the largest security force, with the most modern equipment, but if they are not seamlessly communicating, coordinating and controlling our security and first responder assets, then we are not exercising command over any given threat.

In point of fact, the lack of such coordination does not do proper justice to the talent and technologies that are brought to play under such scenarios.

With respect to my comment that we prepare to respond, it is for this reason that the LACMTA has a robust training program that conducts major interagency threat-focused security exercises. Our training regimen includes both table-top and very realistic, on-ground, simulations and exercises.

These exercises involve, in some cases, as many as thirty agencies that are focused on multiple threats. These exercises anticipate responses to individual or groups of terrorists, weapons of mass destruction, explosives and combinations thereof. Such exercises are always played out initially with a table-top exercise, where all the potential agency players and representatives are given insight into not only the threat faced, but also the role they will be expected to play.

The "real-world" on-ground simulations we conduct are tests of each agency's first-response personnel and their training for their adequacy and ability to interface with other peer groups. The findings and result of these exercises are shared in the post-exercise critiques and debriefings, involving all the agencies that participated. These critiques in turn provide valuable lessons learned which are used to enhance the training of personnel of the agencies involved and to identify new needs, technologies and equipment that would be of benefit to agencies in dealing with actual threats.

In terms of preparing to prevent a terrorist incident, we are very cognizant of the critical role our employees play. They are our "eyes, ears and voice" in our nation's war against terrorism.

We share the goals of the "System Security Awareness for Transit Employees" training course that was developed by the Federal Transit Administration and the National Transit Institute at Rutgers University. That excellent course, crafted in 2002, provided a very professional program to provide training and relevant materials to transit operators and other front-line employees.

To effectively educate our employees at the LACMTA we have also borrowed the best practices from some of the top transit systems in North America. New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority's "See Something?...Say Something!" program is but one example. The Washington Metropolitan Transportation Authority's commitment to raise public and employee awareness of possible terrorist threats is yet another fine example of a program with an appropriate focus.

The LACMTA has provided training for over 9,000 of our employee in situational awareness. This encompasses the who's, what's, why's, where's and how's of dealing with unattended packages and suspicious behavior.

Our agency has also involved our law enforcement and security teams in a highly visible program of public engagement in which our deputy sheriffs move in, and through, our stations, trains and buses, making our customers aware of their presence.

We recognize that to conduct such comprehensive employee training and public awareness programs entails major costs, both in terms of labor and materials. Yet, the LACMTA views these programs as a proper investment in its employees as well as a major “hardening” effort by our agency against possible terrorist threats.

If one mind-set permeates the LACMTA's security posture it is a pro-active attitude to properly train our security personnel, our front-line employees and the general public.

When the attacks on London's mass transit systems occurred on the 7th and 21st of this month our previous and ongoing rigorous training regimen gave us and will continue to give us the capability to initiate an immediate and forceful response. That response is in place today on our expansive rail and bus network, even as I share this testimony with you.

Protecting a service area that spans 1,433 square miles is no simple task for the employees of the LACMTA. The fact that they have the training and know-how in responding to a possible terrorist incident gives them the confidence to assure the general public that all possible measures are being undertaken to protect their welfare.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to share this information, on behalf of the LACMTA, with members of this distinguished subcommittee.